

A CONSIDERATION OF THE HANDI-
CAPPED - PARTICULARLY THE
BLIND MASSEUR

David R. Salmon

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Special Article

A CONSIDERATION OF THE HANDICAPPED—PARTICULARLY THE BLIND MASSEUR

DAVID R. SALMON, New York City

EDUCATORS, industrialists, and other groups conferring in a spirit of sympathy on the problems of the industrial rehabilitation of the handicapped will find their well-intentioned gatherings unproductive unless a definite, constructive plan is drawn up wherein the rehabilitation processes lead toward assured jobs in industry. This calls not only for industrial job surveys by these groups but also for an intensive publicity campaign to overcome unwarranted public prejudice against employment of the handicapped. It cannot be overemphasized—vocational rehabilitation of the handicapped entails a rightabout-face by the public in its general acceptance of handicapped labor.

Well-directed publicity is of particular value now while each man's contribution toward national security is most urgently needed. It may be safely said that more can be done in one war year to aid the handicapped as economic producers than in several peaceful decades. Our government should not miss this opportunity to set these people to work and to educate the public as to their capabilities. It is also worth contemplating whether or not special government consideration should be given to those industries employing a certain percentage of the handicapped.

While the blind masseurs are not in need of vocational rehabilitation, they are a handicapped group in need of jobs. By giving this group cooperative support the medical profession can serve as an example for other groups to do likewise.

There are approximately twenty-five competent blind masseurs licensed by the City of New York. They have all had hospital or private patient experience or both. Eighteen of their number are chartered as the National Association of Blind Masseurs with headquarters at The Lighthouse, 111 East 59th Street, New York City. While they are not physical therapists, they have been trained to use electrotherapy under sighted supervision. The development of a sensitive touch sense, the ability for full concentration

free from the distractions of the seeing world, plus the other qualities of physical fitness, education, and personality which are necessary in the capable masseur make the majority of this group highly employable.

The blind masseur encounters difficulties because of the inability of the layman to separate special capabilities from the idea of handicap in general. The medical profession in England, through its cooperative support, is largely responsible for revealing the skill of the blind masseur to the public, and a livelihood in his chosen field has thus been opened to him.

In considering how the medical profession may aid blind masseurs in this country, it is well to consider further what the English have done. Before entrance is granted to the Eichholtz Institute of Massage and Physiotherapy for the Blind in London, the prospective blind masseur is required to furnish a consensus from at least six medical men in the district in which he hopes to practice that there is scope for the masseur in the locality and a promise that they will consider helping him by sending him patients. Further, he is asked to produce some indication from the local authority of his area that it will use its influence to secure for him a hospital appointment.

In England, blind masseurs may not advertise, but in this connection the Association for Certificated Blind Masseurs, which corresponds to our National Association of Blind Masseurs, is able to undertake suitable forms of advertising and to arrange for general publicity so as to keep the work of the blind masseur constantly before the medical profession and the general public. The Association has strong medical backing, and advertisements are inserted in medical and lay papers describing the qualifications of its members.

The American medical profession can aid the blind masseur by similar cooperative support when he is certified. Means of advertising can be provided through medical papers, and the example can be set for lay papers to follow suit. Recognition of the merits of the blind masseur can be extended by inquiring at the New York Association for the Blind for the names of one or two members

Vocational Guidance and Placement Counselor, The New York Association for the Blind and the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind.

3. The catatonic symptoms are identical with those found in schizophrenia.

4. The clouded sensorium found in organic brain disease differentiates the catatonia of these cases from that of schizophrenia.

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DO YOU KNOW WHAT "BEDLAM" MEANS?

Doctor Jones says, in *Health News*: "My mother, when I was a boy, when a bunch of us got to making a terrible commotion, she'd come in: 'What's all this bedlam about?' she says. Or maybe she'd say we sounded like a 'mad-house.' So I figured they meant about the same thing. But, you know, I've just discovered it was originally Bethlehem: the Bethlehem Royal Hospital for lunatics, as they used to call 'em. That was way back in the fifteenth century, in London. It was a pretty tough place, I guess. I was reading they even let people in for an admission fee to see the inmates. If they didn't perform to suit 'em they'd poke 'em with sticks. Today you'd probably get pinched if you tried to do that to wild animals in the zoo.

"What started me on this: I was just reading a lecture Dr. Hutchings gave in this 'March of Medicine' series. 'The Ascent from Bedlam'—that's the title of it. He was superintendent for years of the Utica State Hospital. He's one of the old-timers in the mental business that's kept up on what they call the new psychiatry: preventive measures, psychoanalysis, and all that.

"It's a remarkable story—this lecture is, of the gradual change in ideas and methods from the old days when people with mental disturbances—they used to light fires under 'em and all that stuff to drive out the demons. Of course old

Hippocrates, way back there B.C., he said it was disease and not devils. But that idea was too newfangled to make much impression. In fact way along in the seventeenth century casting out devils was a thriving business. One bunch of church folks reported that they'd cast out 12,652 of 'em.

"Back in those days they weren't patients and they weren't treated. They were just mistreated. But in Paris, in 1792, they put a fellow by the name of Pinel in charge of an asylum there: a place about like old 'Bedlam.' He had some ideas of his own, Pinel did. He unchained the inmates, gave 'em beds to sleep in and something to occupy their time, like working in the garden and so on, and some of 'em improved. Most of the people around there were busy putting on the French Revolution; otherwise I s'pose Pinel'd have lost his job. Something more or less the same was going on in England. That was really the beginning of giving 'em decent care—these mental cases.

"What Dr. Hutchings calls the 'new psychiatry' began to take hold along about 1909. It got its start, he says, from the 'epoch-making studies' of Dr. Freud. Now they not only treat 'em scientifically and cure a lot of 'em but they aim to prevent these troubles. Well—time's marching on, too. We'll have to finish this some other time."—Paul B. Brooks, M.D.

A NUTRITIONAL MOVIE

"Hidden Hunger," a two-reel picture made as a part of the National Nutrition Program and presented by the Federal Security Agency, brings to the screen in an entertaining and understandable manner the newer knowledge of nutrition. It points up waste of food through improper cooking and waste of money through improper buying.

It shows and tells the minimum essential foods a man should eat every day for maximum health: 1 egg, 1 pint of milk, two vegetables (green, leafy, or yellow), and a potato; an orange or tomato juice and another fruit; three or more slices of the right kind of bread (whole wheat or enriched white); two tablespoons of butter or margarine; and meat.

of the National Association of Blind Masseurs to be used as alternates on physicians' lists.

Sightless masseurs, accepting the realities of their present position, are willing to receive a fee smaller than that generally accepted by

sighted masseurs. They have faith in their abilities and believe that in time they will come into recognition.

Now is the time to consider how we may improve the lot of the handicapped in general. Here is an opportunity to aid a specific group.

VICTORY AND LASTING PEACE DEPEND ON CIVILIAN UNITY

"Two war phrases, 'unified command' and 'grand strategy,' are being heard with increasing frequency. Use of them obviously is made in connection with military action. But they must now be extended to include civilian action. That has a special significance to the army of Bundles for Britain volunteers throughout the country.

"Britain cannot win the war alone; we cannot win it alone. Each nation has promised the other full support, and for that full support each nation's army and navy are undertaking operations under unified agreement, according to grand strategy. But the armies and navies cannot do the entire job. The civilian populations have a job of their own, to help take care of themselves. The civilian populations of America and England are factually one, a great unified group of people, working for a common protection and common aid.

"At this time, America fortunately is not in the dire need in which England stands. We still have enough for ourselves to be able to help her, and keep on helping. Yet we shall not be helping a country called England as much as a land which in this emergency has become our alter ego, our other self.

"Therefore one can say to the men and women of the American home: 'You are strong, you are able, you are kind, so give your strength, your ability, and your kindness, not only to those within your own land, but also to those outside, without whose collaboration your ramparts can-

not stand.' This is not sentiment or emotionalism. It is the soundest policy for winning the war, because it is the application to civilian life of the theory of unified command and grand strategy.

"It is also well to remember that we committed ourselves to a job which must continue. Bundles for Britain and other war relief agencies were founded to help the people of a country in distress. Those people are still in distress. To decrease our efforts in their behalf now that we face having our own distress, would be as if we said: 'Now that we are hit, we cannot think of you.' This would be in contradiction to the concept of unified command and grand strategy which the leaders of our two countries are so trying to perfect. So we must continue wholeheartedly and untiringly the efforts to help Britain's stricken civilians. In that way we say to them: 'Even though we are hit, we still think of you.' If we were in England's plight and England in ours, we would cherish such a spirit toward us from Britain. It is for us to establish a precedent for the behavior of people of all nations in the future.

"This is war, but also war for a peace, and that peace will be strong and lasting in proportion to the ability of people to work together for a common good. Ultimately this will be the basis of the contribution the United States and Great Britain will make to the future.—Raymond Gram Swing, in *The Lion Rampant*

DOCTORS' ORCHESTRA SOCIETY IN NEW YORK CITY PREPARING FOR CONCERTS

The Doctors' Orchestra consists now of 60 physicians and dentists who are playing members of the orchestra. Professional musicians have been almost completely eliminated. The orchestra is at present preparing for two concerts: for the State Medical Convention to be held at the Waldorf-Astoria on April 28 and for their fourth annual concert to be held at Town Hall on May 8.

The program for the above consists of the Schubert unfinished, and the Beethoven second symphonies, Weber's *Euryanthe* overture, the Tchaikowsky *Marche Slave*, together with a modern composition, and other smaller compositions.

The orchestra has been practicing throughout

the past year and has held weekly rehearsals at the Hospital for Speech Disorders, through the courtesy of Dr. James Sonnett Greene, director of the hospital. Under the tutelage of the conductor, Mr. Fritz Mahler, remarkable progress has been made and through the efforts of the new president, Dr. William Spielberg, the orchestra has assumed proportions very near to those of a professional symphony orchestra.

Tickets for the fourth annual concert on May 8 are now for sale and may be obtained from the chairman of the concert committee, Dr. Alexander Sved, Regent 4-8390, 654 Madison Avenue, New York City and from the president, Dr. William Spielberg, 235 East 22nd Street, New York City, Stuyvesant 9-4402.

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